

### The Lord's Prayer

Luke 11:1-13

*Luke 11:1-4: Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." 2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation But deliver us from the evil one."*

#### Background Notes

The first four verses of Luke 11 contain the well-known so-called "Lord's Prayer," so-called. We say "so-called" because nowhere in Scripture is it called The Lord's Prayer! A better title would be better "The Disciple's Prayer," because the Lord never prayed this prayer for Himself. The Lord did not have to pray "forgive us our sins," or "lead us not into temptation."

This prayer was given to the disciples as a model, or pattern, for prayer. Although it's not wrong to repeat the Lord's Prayer in church services, He didn't give it as a liturgy to be used in church services. In the book of Acts we never read of the early church using the prayer in this way, and there is no exhortation in the epistles to any church to use the Lord's Prayer in this way.

So we believe the well-known (but misnamed) Lord's Prayer was not meant to be prayed liturgically, or repetitiously, or as a ritual. It was meant to be a model or pattern for praying. The disciples had observed the Lord praying on many occasions and they requested that the Lord would teach them to pray. And so the Lord gave his disciples a pattern for praying, and this model is still good for believers today.

#### Doctrinal Points

##### 1. The Lord gave believers a pattern for praying.

"*Our Father*" - we come to God as our Father. This close family relationship was unknown to Old Testament believers, but Christians are part of God's family!

"*Hallowed be Thy Name*" – our prayers should begin with the worship of God.

“*Thy Kingdom Come*” - we long for, and look forward to, Christ’s future Kingdom that will be set up here on this earth.

“*Give us this day our daily bread*” - we acknowledge our dependence on the Lord to meet our basic needs.

“*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us*” - as believers we need to confess our sins in order to maintain fellowship with the Lord. In addition, we can’t expect to have fellowship with the Lord if we are unwilling to forgive others when they wrong us.

“*And lead us not into temptation*” – may we not be led into situations where we will be tempted to do wrong. We know that we are weak, and vulnerable, and prone to sin. May we be preserved from temptation and kept from falling.

“*And deliver us from the evil one*” – may we be delivered, not just from evil, but from the evil one - Satan, the enemy of our souls.

The Lord’s Prayer is a wonderful model for us to follow! The Lord gave believers a pattern for praying.

## **2. The Lord gave believers a principle for praying.**

*Luke 11:5-10: And He said to them, “Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and he will answer from within and say, ‘Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you’? 8 I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs. 9 “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.*

This section of Scripture has sometimes caused confusion, because the man says to his friend who asks for help, “*Don’t bother me. Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you*”(v7). If the man who is asked for bread represents God answering our prayers, does this not give a negative image of God? It seems at first glance that the passage is teaching that God would rather not be bothered with our prayers, and only reluctantly answers when we are persistent and twist His arm!

Well, this passage is not teaching a negative image of God! First of all, this is not a parable but an *illustration*. The man does not represent God, as in a parable. The Lord gave this illustration to demonstrate the principle of “when you pray, don’t give up just because you don’t get an immediate answer.”

If I were to tell you, “Be as dedicated to your Christian service as the members of the Mafia are to their occupation!” – I wouldn’t be implying that you’re actually involved in a crime syndicate - I’d just be using the Mafia as an illustration of total

dedication. So look at this passage as an *illustration* that the Lord gave of a principle for prayer, and not as a parable, with the man in the house representing God.

So the Lord was teaching that we are to *continue* to pray; *continue* to ask; *continue* to seek; *continue* to knock. If a reluctant neighbor will answer the needs of a persistent friend, how much more will God, our *Heavenly Father*, answer our prayers and meet the needs of His children who ask for His help.

There may be all kinds of reason why the Lord doesn't always answer our prayers immediately, but He *does* hear our prayers! And as we continue to pray, and ask, and seek, and knock, our prayers will begin to line up more closely with His will. As a result we will receive, and we will find, and the door will be opened. The Lord gave believers a principle for praying.

### **3. The Lord gave believers a promise for praying.**

*Luke 11:11-13: If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

In these verses God promises us that He will only give us *good* gifts. He will never deceive us with the gifts that He gives, such as giving us a rounded stone that just looks like a roll or loaf of bread. And He will never give us gifts that might frighten or harm us, such as a snake or a scorpion. No, the Lord is our *Heavenly Father*! Just as earthly fathers (who are not perfect, and may even be sinful) give good gifts to their children, how much more will our *Heavenly Father* give good gifts to His children. What a wonderful promise!

And of course the best gift for God's children, and the gift that we most need, and the gift that God most desires to give, is the Holy Spirit. The promise of verse 13 was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The Lord gave believers a promise for praying.

## **Practical Application**

### **1. Don't pray unscriptural prayers.**

If you're a believer, praying for the Holy Spirit to be given to you would be an unscriptural prayer. But wait a minute! Doesn't verse 13 encourage us to pray for the Holy Spirit? Well, remember that verse 13 was spoken to the disciples before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2). Now the Holy Spirit indwells all believers at the time of their salvation. Ephesians 1:13 says that believers are "*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.*" Romans 8:9 indicates that if the Holy Spirit does not dwell in a person, that person is not a believer: "*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if*

*indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*" So we don't have to pray for the Holy Spirit.

However, it is not unscriptural for believers to pray that we would be *led* by the Holy Spirit, and *taught* by the Holy Spirit, and *empowered* by the Holy Spirit, and *enabled* by the Holy Spirit - but we don't have to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the disciples did. The Holy Spirit has already come to indwell every individual Christian, and He has also come to indwell the Church as the Body of Christ. The Church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3), and our individual bodies as believers are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6). So believers today do not have to pray for the Holy Spirit.

## **2. Let's teach the importance of prayer by our example.**

Why did the disciples ask the Lord to teach them how to pray? Because the Lord's example shows that He put a great emphasis on prayer. Notice that it was right after our Lord finished praying that His disciples asked for instruction on how to pray (v1). They asked for instruction because, by our Lord's example, they saw the importance of prayer.

In the Gospel records we often read of the Lord praying. Mark 1:35 says, *"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, Jesus went out and departed to a solitary place, and there He prayed."* This was intrinsic to the lifestyle of our Lord. Prayer was important! He prayed early as He began the day. The disciples were still sleeping - but the Lord was praying, because prayer was important. Luke 5:15-16 says: *"And great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed.... So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed."* The Lord prayed often because prayer was important. He often "took the phone off the hook" and slipped away to pray. Luke 6 says that before the Lord chose the twelve apostles, He spent the whole night in prayer! Prayer was important. No wonder the disciples asked the Lord to teach them to pray. From our Lord's example, they saw the importance of prayer.

We, too, should *realize* the importance of prayer and *teach* the importance of prayer. Did anyone ever ask you to teach him or her to pray? No? I wonder why? Maybe if we prayed more, people would ask us to teach them to pray. Let's teach the importance of prayer by our example.